

Standard 7-5 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of world conflicts in the early twentieth century.

7-5.4 Summarize aspects of the rise of totalitarian governments in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union, including: Fascist aggression and the responses of major powers and the rise of Joseph Stalin. (H)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In Global Studies, students will compare the ideologies and global effects of totalitarianism, Communism, Fascism, Nazism, and democracy in the twentieth century, including Lenin's adaptation of Marxism in Russia, the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe, and the militarism in Japan prior to World War II (GS-5.5).

In US History, students will analyze the United States' decision to enter World War II, including the rise and aggression of totalitarian regimes (USHC-8.1).

It is essential for students to know the problems that existed in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union after World War I, which led to the establishment of totalitarian governments in these countries. Fascism became popular in Italy and Germany because people blamed the democratic governments in the two countries for the problems that existed after World War I and during the Great Depression and were consequently willing to try radical, political, and social experiments in the running of their countries. Fascism was the political movement that emphasized an extreme form of nationalism and power to the state. Named for a Roman symbol of power, a bundle of rods tied with an axe called a *fascis*, Fascist governments denied people their individual liberties and were led by authoritarian leaders. The leaders of Fascist governments used various methods to create unity and spirit and consolidate their power. Such methods included special salutes, military steps and emblems; holding rallies and military parades for the public; and instituting elite military groups that utilized absolute power and terror tactics.

Italy was very dissatisfied with the outcome of WWI in the Treaty of Versailles because the country was not rewarded with a large amount of land. Italy's democratic government was blamed for the inflation, unemployment and economic problems that existed in the country after the war. Benito Mussolini was able to capitalize on the political and economic unrest in the country and gain power by founding the Fascist Party in 1919. He organized a group of supporters called the Black Shirts (for the color of their uniforms), who started to attack Communists and Socialists. Mussolini promised to strengthen the economy and was soon able to gain the support of the middle class and industrialists by ending a general strike that paralyzed the country. He seized power in 1922 when his fellow Fascists marched to Rome and told King Emmanuel to make Mussolini the leader of the government. Mussolini was given the title of "*Il Duce*", or The Leader. He set up a Fascist dictatorship and used a secret police and censorship to maintain his power.

Germany was devastated by World War I and furious with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, especially the war guilt clause. The high cost of war reparations and the loss of valuable territory coupled with the aftermath of war hastened the onset of the Great Depression which led to political dissatisfaction and the perfect opportunity for a demigod to step in by promising to restore former glory. Adolf Hitler helped to found a fascist group called the National Social German Workers or the Nazi Party. Like the Italian Fascists, the Nazis used mass rallies, special salutes, and special troops called the Brown Shirts and used the swastika as its symbol. Hitler and his group attempted to overthrow the Weimar Republic in 1923, but failed. Hitler was imprisoned, and wrote *Mein Kampf*, in which he discussed his goals for Germany. He claimed that the Germans, whom he called “Aryans” were the “master race” and blamed others for Germany’s woes. His book discussed his hatred for the Hebrew people, and his desires to regain lost German lands and unite all German-speaking people. The deepening of the Great Depression strengthened support for Hitler and the Nazi Party, which became the largest political party in 1932. Consequently, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor. Hitler then gained control of the new government and created a totalitarian state by establishing a secret police called the Gestapo, outlawing all other political parties, imprisoning political opponents utilizing censorship and propaganda, banning unions and controlling the economy. Known as the *Fuhrer*, or leader, Hitler and his government focused on building factories and infrastructure and ignored the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles, beginning to militarize Germany.

When the Great Depression occurred, Japan was a newly industrialized country still heavily dependent on its export earnings to finance its imports of essential raw materials and fuel. Already suffering from the introduction of artificial silk products, its luxury export sales plummeted during the Depression, causing distrust of the West and its markets. Further compounded by bad harvests in several regions, the Japanese economy reeled and military leaders touted expansionism in the East (Asia) as a solution to address problems of market, shortages of natural resources and farmland deficiencies simultaneously while building on the nationalists feelings that had made the country a world power just prior to the turn of the century. The Japanese first acted on this policy beginning in 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria. The League of Nations could only voice its disapproval of the invasion, and the Japanese responded by withdrawing from the League in 1933. Japan attacked China in 1937, which caused communist and noncommunist forces in China to unite to fight the foreigners.

Italy and Germany also engaged in military aggression, which soon led to World War II. Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935. The League of Nations protested the attack but did nothing to stop the Italians. The League of Nations also failed in preventing Hitler from militarizing his country and then occupying the Rhineland. Germany, Italy, and Japan formed the Axis Alliance in 1936. Germany and Italy also sent troops and weapons to Spain to assist Francisco Franco in winning the Spanish Civil War in 1936. While these events were taking place, the United States chose to be isolationist during the 1930s, passing a series of Neutrality Acts that prohibited the country from loaning money or selling weapons to countries at war, and thus, hopefully, preventing some of the issues that led the US into the Great War. Great Britain and France falsely believed that a policy of appeasement would prevent another world war. This lack of a firm hand against aggression allowed Hitler to annex Austria in 1938, another violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler then demanded the Sudetenland in western Czechoslovakia

and during the Munich Conference of 1938, the British and French agreed to allow Hitler the Sudetenland in return for promises that his demands for additional territory had ended. The policy of appeasement was proven a failure in early 1939 when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and Italy invaded Albania soon after. WWII began in September 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland and its British and French allies came to its defense abandoning appeasement.

Joseph Stalin became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1928 after having been the general secretary of the Communist Party. After Lenin's death in 1922, Stalin had worked hard to win support from his fellow Communist members. He exiled Leon Trotsky, his biggest rival, in 1929; created a totalitarian state; and made the country an industrial power. He had a secret police monitor everything said and written; censored all sources of information; and used propaganda to maintain his power. During the Great Purge, Stalin even terrorized members of the Communist Party, whom he thought were a threat to his power. Furthermore, Stalin persecuted religious institutions, primarily the Russian Orthodox Church and had religious leaders killed, forcing religious faith and practice to go underground. As a totalitarian leader, Stalin implemented a command economy, ordering several Five-Year Plans, which focused on heavy industrialization. Industrial production increased dramatically, but there were shortages of light, consumer goods. Stalin also began a policy of *Collectivization* in the country. His government confiscated all farms and combined them into huge government-controlled farms to increase food production. Agricultural production increased by the late 1930s, but many wealthy peasants (kulaks) who protested collectivization, were killed. Stalin, thus improved the economy and education in the Soviet Union, however the people had no political rights.

It is not essential for students to know the results of Mussolini's economic policies or the specific details leading up to the Spanish Civil War.

Assessment Guidelines:

The objective of this indicator is to *summarize* the aspects of the rise of totalitarian governments in Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is important for students to *explain* how World War I and the Great Depression led to political and economic problems in Italy and in Germany, which ultimately resulted in the creation of fascist states. Students need to also *explain* how the Great Depression contributed to the establishment of a militaristic government in Japan. Appropriate assessment should also require students to *infer* how the weak response of the League of Nations towards the military aggression displayed by Germany, Italy, and Japan, and the failure of the appeasement policy led the world closer to war. Students should be able to *explain* how Joseph Stalin rose to power and how he created a totalitarian dictatorship.